

*A Defense of* ❀ ❀ ❀  
❀ *Second Rate Writers*

By common consent there are more really good books being written at the present day in England than was the case ever before, even in the Elizabethan age. Those readers who are accustomed to hear the critic pronounce this is the age of inferior literature, and that the literary

plain is desolved from Dan to Beersheba, may hesitate for a moment to admit the truth of this assertion. Yet we think that a little consideration will change their opinion. Wherever we look it is impossible to deny the high level of accomplishment which our writers have attained. That it is not so well recognized is perhaps due to its very abstruse character producing a kind of mental dyspepsia in the reader whose perceptions are further dulled by the haphash of the novelist and the blang of the daily papers. We need only compare the average English book of today with that of the last two or three generations. As a rule, we make the comparison with the great books which alone have survived. Let us take the department which is often allowed to usurp the whole name of literature—fiction and poetry—as an instance. We have no Thackeray or Scott or Dickens and Mr. Lang is entitled to that extent to maintain his preference for the novels written before 1860 to those published since. But if we think of the best dozen or so of our living novelists Mr. Meredith, of course, is *hors concours*—we are inclined to challenge any one to produce their equal from a single year of the Nineteenth century, but the first class remains.

In poetry, again, we have no great writer; but we have sixty or seventy minor poets who would all have got into the collection of Chalmers if they had had the luck to be born a hundred and fifty years earlier. In other departments of literature the case is the same. Matthew Arnold is used to complain, with great truth, of the miserable way in which the "journalism-work" of literature, such as translation and newspaper work, was done in this country. Nowadays skill and conscience are brought to both tasks, and the once guilty "translations" of the *Œuvres* of Balzac, of Mr. Lainsbury edited, and Dr. Randall's *Œuvres* of Marcus Aurelius or Mr. Frazer's *Pausanias* to show how great a chance has taken place.

It remains to consider whether the great increase in literary ability of the second order is a good thing. One first instinct is to say unhesitatingly "Yes." Since reading is practically universal among the rising generation, it is surely well that the greatest possible quantity of good, sound, wholesome material should be given them to read. Good, wholesome writing is always better than the bad, sensational, at times often obnoxious stuff which was so much more prevalent from the days when Sir Anthony Absolute banned the circulating library down to the last generation, but which is now almost killed by the greater popularity which—in the ultimate decency of things—attends on the better writer who now tell their good stories. One does not see how at one can seriously object to an increase in the quantity of good reading. If the literary work can be harmful, but the good deal of good stuff to be cleared out of some critic's mind on that subject.

The ethical reason given for the dislike of this dead level of excellence is that it is likely to hinder the efflorescence of works of genius. This appears to rest on the curious theory that a man of genius will tend to assimilate his work to that of the majority; but the usual practice of men of genius is just the reverse. Experience shows, furthermore, that great writers have appeared most freely—so as there can be any classification of times and seasons—the midst of a general literary movement of considerable excellence. To say that the general abundance of writers is a hindrance to the appearance of geniuses is about as wise as to say that, because most women in France cook it must be peculiarly hard to get a supremely meritorious dinner in Paris.—*The London Spectator*.

**"Schley and Santiago."**

"Schley and Santiago" has been received. This is the book written by George Edward Graham, the special representative of the Associated Press on board the Brooklyn during the entire five months of the campaign. It is illustrated with instantaneous photographs taken by the author during the cruise and during the fight with the Spanish fleet, and contains also a personal narrative of the battle by Admiral Schley. The book is undoubtedly historical and interesting as well. As the New York Herald has said, "The reader is in the telling of facts that are rather hard to make deductions that several naval officers need a court of inquiry to re-establish their reputations, if they can be established."

"The facts of the story of the movements and operations of the Flying Squadron as the author tells them in this book are correct," writes Admiral Schley, and its publishers present it to the public as the first accurate, detailed account of the cruise of the squadron, the blockade of Santiago harbor and the destruction of Cervera's fleet.

The following is a copy of the letter written to Graham by Admiral Schley about which the navy department is reported to be concerned, and an explanation of it is believed, will be demanded because of the reference therein to Admiral Sampson's whereabouts at the time of the battle of Spanish-American war.

THE ARLINGTON, Washington, D. C., Nov. 14, 1901.  
My Dear Graham: To begin, in replying to your letter I have no literary intentions or pretensions and I shall be glad if you shall succeed in getting the work you intend publishing just after the war before the people; there is

other one person save you, or Cook, or Clark, or any other who could tell the story of Santiago. All of us saw it beginning to end, and the Brooklyn and Oregon were exposed from beginning to end of the combat and were closer enemy at every stage of the fight than any other ships. If these facts are essential to one who writes

Y. to tell the story of Santiago, and I'd tell it without fear  
in without favor. Sampson was in Siboney harbor the morn  
ing when the fight began, and O'Shaughnessy of Chic  
swears to it. This fact you ought to bring out clearly,  
it is certified to by O'Shaughnessy, who was on the be  
and

No, I will indorse you in the highest way possible, "you may fire when you are ready, Graham." Very  
sincerely yours,  
W. S. SCHLEY.

**Milliken-Milligan Family.**  
All persons bearing the names of Milliken or Milligan and other cognate forms of spelling, such as Millikan, Millikan, Mulliken and Mulligan, are descended from the Saxon-Norman race whose cognomen was "Milling" or "Millington".

It passed in England in 1065 and was soon carried across the Scottish border and planted in Ayrshire and the lands; but the family became more prolific after crossing the channel to "Auld Ireland." In Ulster, amongst other places, the name changed to "Milanges" and "Milligen."

But the Scottish branches sent scions across the Atlantic as early as 1650-1680, to become planted in the

and in New England. About 1750-60, descendants of Milliken and Milligan came to Pennsylvania, and moved onward to settle in Virginia and the Carolinas, where their posterity became almost like, as a minister once said, "the stars on the seashore" for numbers. Then, since 1830, the "star of empire" drew westward, until now members of the Milliken and Milligan families are scattered all over the Eastern and Middle States, families are

Whatever the form of spelling the surname, the family names remain the same. They have always been sturdy, self-reliant, conservative folk, who had the courage of their convictions, and when their minds were "made up" they were not to be moved.

they were immutably a part of the laws of the United States. Few families, if any, in the United States produced as many lawabiding, self-respecting citizens, or many men in the learned professions. They had a sense of honor and regarded truth as one of the cardinal virtues. Until recently no attempt was made to compile a history of all branches of this

general genealogy and history of the Saxon-Norman sept, and the writer now has about 60 names of the connection. The work of collecting facts and records and information is going steadily forward, and it is intended to publish a book of which all who bear the honored name may be proud. Every family of the blood has

Rev. G. T. Riddle, Saxon

WILLIAM H. C.

Kearz Falls, Me.

